

## **HOLY LEDGER**

by Alter Brody

The Jew,  
Like a mad accountant  
Trying to make sense out of a senseless ledger  
Trying to balance the Holy Scriptures of his life  
With double-entry bookkeeping-  
With Good and with Evil,  
With Sin and with Virtue,  
With Reward and with Punishment-  
When the entries failed to balance  
When Punishment exceeded Sin  
Juggling the accounts  
To make debit and credit meet,  
Inventing  
Flimsy fraudulent transgressions  
To cover up  
The overdraft of his agony.

But suddenly  
In a moment of revulsion  
In a moment of insidious sanity,  
Sick of his futile juggling  
He flings down his pen-  
Calling God Himself to account  
For the terrible, impossible, unexplainable  
Discrepancies in His Book!

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When that little boy  
Who, at his first glimpse of the Emperor  
Bubbled:

"The Emperor is naked! The Emperor is naked!"--  
*Stopped and took another look*  
~~and said~~

He realized that it was not enough

~~To see through the Emperor's imaginary clothes~~

But through the skin in which his flesh was wrapped  
Through the flesh in which his bones were packed  
Through the glued potsherds of the skull  
Clamped tightly

Over the treasure-trove of his brain

And through the pleated folds of the brain itself

To the last peel of the onion

To the innermost underwear

Which he called his soul--

For it turned out

That the Emperor was not really naked

But like an onion--

Like a rag doll

Was made up of clothes

With nothing at all inside of them!

In fact

From that day on

Wherever he looked--

If he but looked closely enough,

Everything in the world

And the whole vast blinking countenance of the earth

Caught by surprise

Opened up endlessly to his prying eyes

Like a nest of Chinese boxes

One inside the other--

But there was nothing at all inside of them

Or outside of them

But another box.

# MAGNIFICAT

## "Stabat Mater"

In my "~~Stabat Mater~~" it is Mary who is on the Cross and not Jesus--not the Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception but Mary the earthly and very earthy Mother of Jesus, Mary the Woman who is nailed forever to the Cross of the Biological to the Ixion's Wheel of Reproduction to which her body is bound <sup>forever</sup> not by a sorrowing God the Father, a sacrifice for the sins of mankind but by her own pitiless Mother--Mother Nature, a sacrifice for <sup>Nature's own</sup> ~~her~~ Original Sin--the birth of life. But she is not a hesitant agonized unwilling victim. She does not shrink from the cup: "If it be possible let this cup pass from me!" She does not reproach her ruthless Mother; "Why hast thou forsaken me!" She offers herself gladly happily proudly, to save her princely Son from the treadmill of Nature, to ransom his body from the Cross to which her's is nailed, <sup>like his,</sup> not <sup>^</sup> by her hands and feet but from within, by her womb and by her breasts. Not like the struggling Ram, nailed by his own horns to the thicket, that Abraham offered up for Isaac, ~~she~~ <sup>she is</sup> a Ewe that offers herself eagerly for her Lamb, for her Isaac. She lays herself down upon the altar, draping herself proudly in her bonds, wearing her chains as ornaments. She takes upon herself Nature's implacable life-sentence: "Increase and multiply!", accepting as hers the Maculate Conception of the womb so that his might be the Immaculate Conception of the brain, grounding her own soul with the ballast of reproduction so that his might rise unencumbered in that audacious Ascension of the human mind which she can accompany only with her heart's eye--in that miraculous jail-break of Man from Nature's escape-proof cosmic penitentiary in which she who is Nature's trusty, can be an accomplice but never a companion, the Holy Mother of God but never the Holy Child



which only her Son can be, the great parturient rocket-engine of the human soul, whose downward earthward thrust, lifts the precious capsule with which she is in labor, upward skyward, beyond the pull of Earth's apron-strings and her own, into the free gravity-less heaven of Space.

## THEORY OF A LEISURE SEX

It is noteworthy that the preoccupation with sports and games is much stronger in the male than in the female and does not slacken after childhood as it does in the female but metastasizes in the adult male in a disguised transmogrified form until like an unchecked cancerous tumor it overgrows and supplants the normal natural tissue of "real" life. Fundamentally this stems from the fact that the male unlike the female is relatively unemployed biologically, a leisure sex so far as the prime biologic objective of sex is concerned--reproduction. Unlike the female whose body is literally "occupied" from chest to pelvis in "making a living", his sexual apparatus is an outer appendage, attached to the bottom of his torso by nature almost like an afterthought which strictly speaking the male is, in the long annals of evolution. Since reproduction the obsessive objective of nature does not play such a dominant role in the male he is <sup>not</sup> faced at puberty with such a psychosomatic metamorphosis such a radical rupture with his childhood self and can continue as an adult to play at life with symbolic counters instead of being forced to live it at first hand like the girl whose playlife stops with her dolls. Puberty in a reversal of the insect stages turns the little girl from a winged butterfly into a soft fluffy caterpillar grounded by her biological impedimenta; the boy remains a butterfly, a playboy, all his life. And not only in sex, which is a fulltime occupation for the female but only one of his hobbies for the male, though with his incorrigible fantasy he has up-staged what is a minor reproductive walk-on into an elaborate production which he calls sexuality. The sexual act itself is a caricature of the psychological disparity between the sexes. The adult male regresses in his foreplay to a nursing infant and his climax is

an attempt to return to the womb whereas the female remains throughout, the primal encompassing adult mother. This atavistic persistence of the childhood psyche gives the male an unfair but overwhelming intellectual advantage over the female, just as the postponed physiological maturity of the human young gives the specie a decisive "headstart" over all other animal species, the lowest of which reach maturity earliest. For the creative imagination which is the source of science as well as art, in fact of all of Man's organized social constructs, whether aesthetic or technological social or economic--depends for its developement upon the interplay the "free association" to use the psychoanalytic term, between mind and environment. This is at its best in the intellectual climate of childhood, the ideal schizoid stage, before mind and environment, the observer and the observed have been wedged together by the pressure of life into one undetachable unmanipulatable whole.

This is a fate from which the Draft Board of Nature has deferred if not exempted the male. Left to his own devices by Nature the adult male drifts with little inner modification from childhood into manhood, and maturity simply means specializing in his favorite game until that game becomes life to him and life a game. His vocabulary reflects this bent--from Show Business to Pajama Game from the War Theatre where he performs his wars to the Working Models with which he plays God with atoms genes and universes. Long before Heisenberg substituted Probability for Fact in Physics, when Man first abstracted life into language, the playful male discovered that life can best be handled wholesale rather than retail--not by living it ad seriatum (for which a life-span is hardly enough to satisfy his voracious



appetite) not by direct contact with it as the female is constrained to do, but at second hand with handles rather than with hands with indicies parameters and graphs with generalizations categories concepts with intricate diagrams whose incorporeal outlines he can spin into a thousand different designs untrammelled by the unwieldy particularity of life.

And this has paid off only too well for him. The annals of sport testify how man has been able to drive himself in play to records of speed strength agility and endurance which were thought to be physiologically impossible and this is even more pertinent in the developement of intellectual musculature. Because he has been able to pour himself with such childlike absorption and intensity and with that great seriousness of childhood into his play he has been able to bring his games-- Art Science Philosophy Religion Business War to such a peak of hyper-natural efficiency and perfection that they have either supplanted or completely refashioned his crude original biologic reflexes so that only vestigial traces of them are left. Indeed they are overflowing from the purely human sphere and are now poised to refashion the elemental forces of nature as they did that of man. <sup>Having</sup> ~~Because they have~~ burst their biologic banks they are not only endangering the life of the specie but are threatening to upset the precarious ecological balance which man's slow-witted mother, Mother Nature, has achieved on earth after several billion years of laborious biochemical bookkeeping. Man the manchild of nature has developed a case of gigantism and in the process his planetary home has shrunk to Lilliputian proportions. So that he finds himself an infant Samson straining at the pillars of his playpen world, an overgrown calf in the china closet of Nature.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST  
OR THE LEGEND OF THE NOBLE SAVAGE

The intellectual's need to create and deify the Noble Savage is such a persistent historical obsession that, as in all obsessions which are rituals to exorcise some basic anxiety, the root must be sought in the anxiety against which it is directed. Starting with Rousseau's original Noble Savage--the idealization of the Algonquin Indian of New France in the Age of the Enlightenment, it was succeeded in the following century by the Marxian apotheosis of the Proletarian and the Nietzschean Eidolen, the amoral Blonde Beast, to be followed in our own century by the Little Savage that was worshipped by the intellectual as the Holy Child in dozens of little chapels called Progressive Schools that sprang up all over America in the twenties. And now the latest Noble Savage of the intellectual--the Black Beast also "Beyond Good and Evil", beyond "middle class morality" like his Nietzschean brother the Blonde Beast--the Negro "cat" of the northern Harlems whether a Black Power militant or a self-employed mugger or an A.D.C. Madonna--~~metamorphosed by the white~~  
*a black*  
~~intellectual~~ *idea* Sacred Cow that milks the "white liberal" instead of being milked by him and butts his for good measure.

T'was not always thus. The chronic admiration of the intellectual for the "underdog" started when he himself was an underdog, with an admiration for the upperdog, with the worship of the Savage Noble rather than the Noble Savage--the Chieftens and Kings and Demi-gods whose elaborate meatcutting operations upon each other before the walls of Troy is described by the civilian Homer with such lipsmacking relish in the Iliad. And milleniums before that, to the very first intellectuals, the

anonymous Michael Angelos of the Cro-Magnon cave murals whose glorification of the Noble Beast charging in imperial splendor contrasts invidiously with the scratches of the puny human hunters buzzing around it like gnats. But whether upperdog or underdog, Noble Savage or Savage Noble or Noble Beast it is always the animal and the savage in man and beast that seems to spellbind the intellectual.

It is easy to dismiss this compulsive mythopoeia of the intellectual as a form of self-contempt and even self-hatred but fundamentally it is self-fear rather than self-hatred, a sort of acrophobia which always attacks the intellectual as he scales the pinnacles of his own mind and penetrates the privacy of Nature, a dizzying impulse tempting him to look down the depths from whence he climbed and totter backwards into the siren abysses of the Unconscious.

This is the schizophrenia which the Hubris Intellectualis brings down upon its head not from any God above but from the demons in the depths of his own soul, for venturing too far and too high from Natures apron-strings, a conflict now driving toward solution on a grander more Promethean scale than that of any Greek tragedy though the contemporary intellectual is unblissfully unaware of it.

ITS NOT THE MEDIUM--ITS THE MESSAGE

OR

" SING ME A SONG OF SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE "

OR

DON'T LOOK NOW--YOUR MESSAGE IS SHOWING

IN the thirties it was the evils of capitalism and the coming triumph of the proletariat. In the fifties all art with a moral, all "songs of social significance" were hooted down in the name of art for art's sake. "If you have a message send it through Western Union". But in the same fifties what the hooters of message art were cheering was really a brand new message preaching the evils of sexual repression and the glory of the Holy (female) Orgasm with the male officiating like a priest at the vaginal altar. By the sixties the hooters of the proletarian novel and drama of the thirties were piously amending the most inept combinations of the English language as Art as long as they dealt with the evils of segregation and the virtues of integration, particularly and most uncritically if they were fathered by Negroes. Since the Negro is economically the very essence of the Proletarian and is sexually virtually a phallic symbol and these fictional sermons are liberally sprinkled with four-letter words which like raisins in cake, make the cheapest kind of literary fillers, the readers and audiences of the sixties are able to get all the three messages of the century for the price of one. Which must be very hard both on Western Union and on Art for Art's sake. Which also proves that no matter what the medium, there is always a message lurking in it. Or do "look a gift-horse in the mouth" even if it is "a horse of a different color".

## LOGIC, THE BEAUTIFUL MEDUSA

Logic

The beautiful Medusa

*Turning*  
~~Turns~~ the cells of Man's flesh

Into a mosaic of pink pebbles--

If he gazes too long

Too fondly at her face--

Sculptor becomes sculpture

Builder becomes building

Flesh becomes stone!

Only Chance

Her ugly unkempt jealous sister

*free him from her*  
Can ~~break~~ ~~the~~ spell--

Toppling

The braided helmet of her hair

Into a mop of snakes,

Scratching crazy doodles

On the observatories of her eyes,

Breaching

The impregnable symmetry of her face

With an imbecile grin!



SERMON ON A TEXT

I

"Man that is born of woman..."

(Which is Mother Nature!)

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"

Is this a rhetorical question

Wagging its reproachful forefinger

In the face of the Lord

Or a wheedling whimper

Of a self-confessed criminal

Throwing himself on the mercy of the Court!

Or is it a riddle that Man is propounding

Not to God but to himself

The Riddle of the Sphinx,

Godheaded animal-bodied Man

Asking himself where he comes from!

Did the God beget the animal or the animal the God;

Did the mind create the body or the body the mind,

Was Eve formed out of Adam who was formed by God,

(As Adam told himself!)

Or did Adam come out of Eve,

In a most Maculate Conception

In a monstrous Virgin Birth

Without benefit of God the Father--

Or any other father!

"Man that is born of woman...."

(Which is Mother Nature!)

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean!"

II

Man

Who calls himself the Son of God,  
Proud of his father and his "father's business",  
Considering himself a partner  
In the firm of God & Son,  
Harboring the awesome thought  
That someday  
He would succeed his father in the business--  
But when he digs up his birth certificate  
In the fossilized family album  
He is faced with the bitter truth  
That he has known all along  
Though he tried hard not to know--  
That he is a bastard  
Fatherless and anonymous,  
Like one of those dumb creatures  
Whose shepherd he thought he was,  
All of whom knew the universal secret  
That only he didn't know--  
But could'nt tell him  
Because ~~only~~ he had the gift of speech--  
The open open secret  
That he and every other living thing  
Were the spawn of the billion-breasted slut,  
Mother Nature  
Everyone's mother and no one's mother,  
Who cast up her children

Like stray fish-roe  
On the rocky doorsteps of the sea--  
Foundlings  
To be suckled by chance breasts  
As a piece of driftwood is suckled  
Tossed sportively  
From one rollicking breaker to another!  
But where did he get that crazy notion  
Of a divine Father who created him in His own image  
In a world in which there were no fathers  
Divine or otherwise--  
Only a mother  
Who did not know her children  
From her other droppings.  
And where did he get that crazier notion  
That prim, fastidious homosexual fantasy  
Of a world sprung full-formed  
From the brow of God the Father;  
A clean crisp blueprint of a world  
Blown up by a divine Draftsman  
Into galaxies and nebulae--  
The Word made Flesh, the flesh assembled  
Into the burnished machinery of the Heavenly Host  
Revolving frictionlessly  
In a cosmic carousel--  
The Immaculate Conception of a male mind  
Instead of the excremental tracks  
The steaming, teeming turds plopped in space  
When the urge comes upon her

From the incontinent, mindless womb  
Of the great self-fertilized, ever-pregnant Sow  
God the Mother--  
Shaped only by the labor of her grinding loins  
And the visceral passages through which it is squeezed  
And the hands of Chance  
Her blind midwife.